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This Man Is a Missing Link



WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

WASHINGTON: The House Select Committee on Assassinations has released this composite drawing in hope that citizen recognition might shed additional light on the assassinations of Pres. John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sketch shows a man who reportedly represented himself as a member of the U.S. intelligence community in the 1960's and who on occasion used the name Maurice Bishop.

By Dick Russell

Early last week, the House Select Committee on Assassinations released photographs of four men, one a



WORLD WIDE PHOTOS

WANTED: Information on the whereabouts of the three men pictured above. The House Select Committee on Assassinations is seeking to question the men in connection with its investigation into the deaths of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. The photo at left was taken in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, moments after President Kennedy was shot. The two other men may have been in Mexico City in the fall of 1963 when Lee Harvey Oswald was there. Anyone with information about these men should contact the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Washington, D.C., 20515.

House Assassination Investigation

By Dick Russell *Continued from page 1*

that included Congressman Richardson Preyer and Carl Stokes. There has long been speculation that someone pretending to be Oswald may have called at the Cuban and Soviet embassies, blazing a false trail.

- The photograph of a man on the curb in Dealey Plaza is known among assassination

researchers as "the umbrella man." In films taken as the president was shot, the same man is depicted raising and then lowering a black umbrella as JFK's limousine passes. Some researchers have speculated that the umbrella might actually have been an exotic weapon that fired the fatal shot.

Maurice Bishop is a more proved story. My knowledge of him began in the summer of 1976 when, in the course of researching a book on the assassin, I spent a week in Miami's Cuban exilic community. One of the men I hoped to interview was Antonio Veciana, a founder of an anti-Castro group called

Alpha 66. In the early 1960s—before the Kennedys curtailed commando raids against Cuba—Veciana had helped raise \$100,000 to support such paramilitary attacks. Reportedly, he had also been involved in at least one assassination plot against Fidel Castro. But when I mentioned Veciana's name to a Miami investigator for Senator Richard Schweiker's JFK subcommittee, I was immediately discouraged. The man did live in Miami, I was told, but had recently been released from prison on a narcotics charge and

wouldn't talk to me.

Nonetheless, I found Veciana's name in the telephone book and called him. He spoke halting English but agreed to meet me downtown across from the Trailways bus station. He was a stocky Cuban, about six feet tall, and he looked to be about 40. After an hour of small talk in a nearby grill, we drove to one of the big hotels along Miami Beach and found an isolated corner in the lobby. There, I learned that Schweiker's staff was protecting him as its key witness. There, I learned too about Maurice Bishop.

Veciana had been president of a Havana accounting firm when Castro took over Cuba. Embittered by Castro's turn toward Communism, he began to secretly raise funds for an anti-Castro uprising. Shortly thereafter, in 1960, he received a visit from the gentleman who called himself Maurice Bishop. It was to be the first of more than 100 meetings, in a relationship that would last 12 years.

Bishop, who stood about 6'2" and appeared about 45, dressed expensively and had sunspots below his eyes. He told Veciana he was part of an American intelligence service, but instructed him not to ask which one. He wanted to train Veciana to lead a group of anti-Castro Cubans in sabotage and psychological warfare inside Cuba. Another American, whom Veciana knew only as "Melton," assisted with his instruction.

The initial strategy was to spread false rumors among the population about the economic instability of Castro's regime—a CIA tactic later used against Salvador Allende in Chile. When this failed to create a stir, Bishop used Veciana to coordinate an assassination attempt. The first was scheduled as Castro prepared to introduce the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, but was cancelled when Bishop feared a violent Soviet reaction.

The next was planned for October 1961 during a Castro speech, using a bazooka fired from a nearby rooftop. But Castro got wind of the plot and Veciana was forced to flee Cuba by boat. Bishop, who spoke French and possessed a fake passport from Belgium, stayed on undetected.

A month later in Miami, Bishop contacted Veciana again. Together they laid plans to form the group Alpha 66. Veciana traveled to New York, where he worked on another plan to eliminate Castro should he come to speak at the United Nations. Then, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, Veciana says that Bishop organized a series of commando attacks on Russian merchant ships in Cuban harbors. Bishop's plan, he adds, was to force another confrontation.

"Bishop kept saying Kennedy would have to be forced to make a decision," he remembers. "The only way was to put him up against the wall. Three ships were attacked in different ports of Cuba. The first one was a mistake in identity; it was a British ship. The other two were Russian. To further make Kennedy reach a point, we held a press conference in Washington to let him know about the commando groups. That was when Kennedy ordered that I be confined to Dade County, Florida."

In response to the terrorist raids, the Justice Department restricted a number of Cuban exiles to Dade County in the spring of 1963. But that summer, Veciana's meetings with Bishop resumed. In August, Bishop had him fly to Dallas.

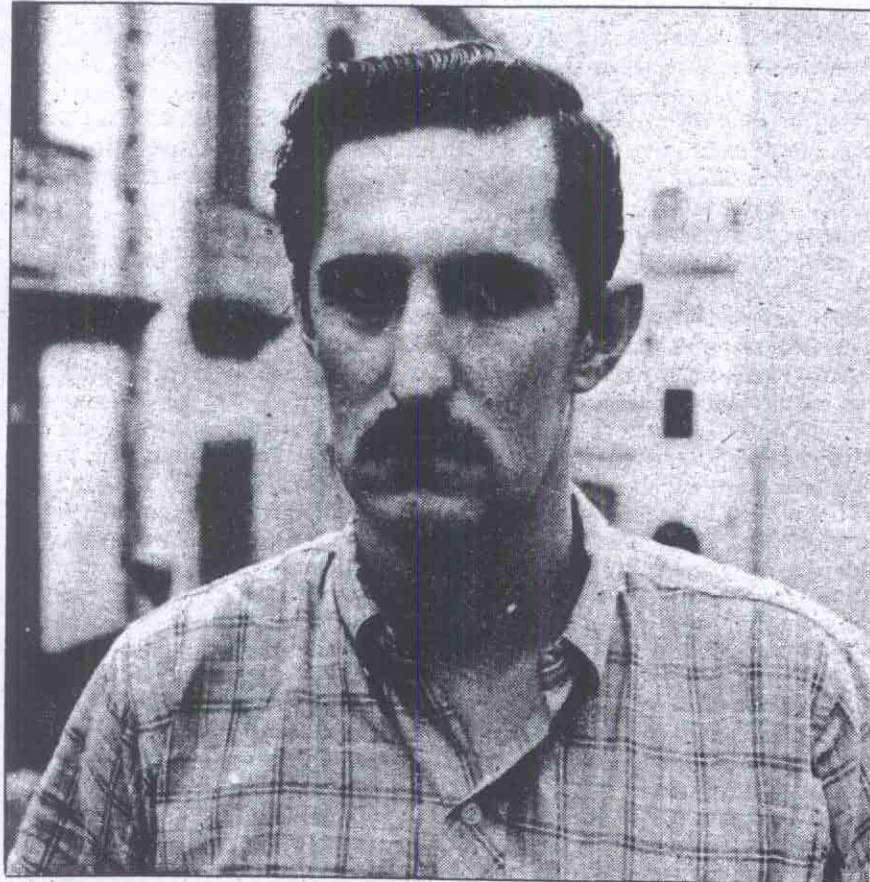
"When I arrived there," says Veciana, "Bishop had given me the address to a building, a bank or insurance company. Bishop was waiting there with a young guy, an American, and the three of us walked to a cafeteria. The young guy did not say one word. He was very quiet, very strange. When I take a cup of coffee, Bishop says to him: 'I'll meet you in two or three hours.' Bishop and I then talked about the movement and our plans, but not when this guy was there. This was Lee Oswald. I didn't know until November when I saw his picture. But this means Oswald was working with Bishop."

"After the Kennedy assassination," Veciana continues, "the FBI contacted me to ask several questions. At first I was worried but the agent who interviewed me said that it was a matter of routine, nothing important. I didn't tell the agent anything, because I thought it would harm the movement."

After the assassination, Veciana says he waited a year before going back to Dallas. "I never asked Bishop about Oswald," he says, "because Bishop always told me that in this type of work, you just do things, you don't ask." Then, early in 1964, Bishop himself raised the subject. Veciana's cousin was then a leading official in Castro's intelligence service. Many times, Bishop had beseeched Veciana to try to glean information from the cousin.

"Now Bishop asked me if I thought that by getting my cousin a considerable amount of money, would he say he'd talked to Oswald to make it appear that Oswald was working for Castro? Because of this, I asked Bishop if it was true that Oswald had been talking with Castro agents. Bishop said it did not matter if it was true, what was important

Continued on next page



WIDE WORLD

Antonio Veciana, associate of Maurice Bishop and leader of Alpha 66, the extremist Cuban exile group dedicated to the overthrow of the Castro regime. Has been questioned by the House Select Committee.